

VETERANS JOURNAL



PUBLISHED BY
FRANKLIN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION
250 West Broad Street, Columbus Ohio 43215
(614) 462-2500 FAX (614) 462-2505
E-mail: veteransservice@co.franklin.oh.us
Website: www.co.franklin.oh.us/vets



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Fall 2004 Issue

David M. Bradley, Director
Anna M. Henry, Administrative Assistant

The information in this journal is being provided to make the veteran community aware of some current events, activities and veterans issues that are of mutual concern. From time to time, we will include some relevant information important enough to be repeated to insure that veterans and their families are aware of the full range of benefits and entitlements available to them.



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?

21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?

21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.

3. Why are his gloves wet?
His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time, and if not, why not?

He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face, and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

5. How often are the guards changed?

Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, and 365 days a year.

6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30".

Other requirements of the Guard:

They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the

uniform {fighting} or the tomb in any way.

After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn.

The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform.

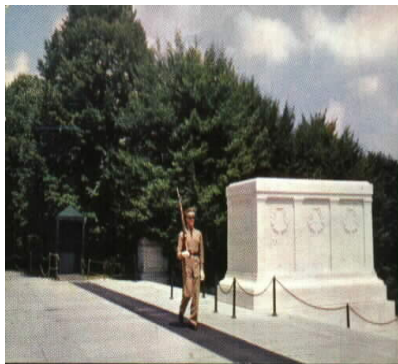
Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV.

All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are

and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis {the boxer} and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, {the most decorated soldier of WWII} of Hollywood fame.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.



ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD,
AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT
SHINE UPON THEM.

I don't know if you saw this in the news but it really impressed me. Funny, our US Senate/House took 2 days off as they couldn't work because of the expected storm.

On the ABC evening news, it was reported tonight that, because of the dangers from Hurricane Isabelle approaching Washington DC, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment.

They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!"

Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment; it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a serviceperson.

The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

Jim Forster

We can be very proud of our young men and women in the service no matter where they serve.



Be Cautious of Home Loans

A veteran, with a VA Home Loan, got a call over the weekend from a representative from an investor's corporation, whose headquarters is in St. Petersburg FL. They are listed by the VA as an organization that can do veterans home loans. They have offices around the country.

The company's representatives are very aggressive and will use multiple salespersons to try to convince/pressure the veteran to refinance their current loan. In this case they offered to refinance his home loan for no cost to the veteran at an interest rate of 4.75 %, lower his house payment and offered to close the loan in 6 days. They asked the veteran to give them a good faith check of around \$650 to secure the deal. Closing costs were around \$6,000 which would be rolled back into a new 30 year loan. The department of Commerce told the veteran that closing costs should generally run around \$1400.

Veterans need to be wary of these deals that sound too good to be true; they are! Once the veteran signs the new note there probably is little that anyone can do for them. If they fail to make the payments on the new note, their house will end up in foreclosure. Please advise your veterans to be cautious.

National Cemetery Administration Nationwide Grave Locator

The Information Systems Service is pleased to announce the launching of the Web-based (Internet) Nationwide Grave Locator (NGL) system on April 8, 2004. The NGL has the ability to search some three million interment records contained in the Burial Operations Support System (BOSS) database (National and State Veterans cemeteries, as well as Arlington National Cemetery), and provide query results based on simple or advanced search criteria. The database that supports the NGL will be updated on a daily basis.

The NGL is being widely publicized in an effort to inform the general public of this highly valued-searchable repository of interment data. Linkage between the NGL and individual Cemetery Web Pages has also been established, which will provide an interested party with specific information about the cemetery where a veteran or other family member is interred.

Please visit the NGL site at <http://www.cem.va.gov> and then clicking on the Nationwide Gravesite Locator link. Feedback and or questions are encouraged and can be forwarded to either of our two Helpdesks at <http://helpdesk.cem.va.gov> or e-mail NCACO Helpdesk. Gaining familiarity with the attributes of the NGL will prove to be beneficial in responding to questions and query results that the general public may have once they begin accessing the NGL on April 8th.



**U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development**

Dear Veteran:

I'm writing to let you know about an innovative new HUD program called Homewise that will make homeownership a reality for a Veteran in Columbus, Ohio. This program is being piloted in 10 cities across the country, and Columbus and Seattle, Washington, are the only two cities where the program is specifically set-aside for Veterans.

In Columbus, HUD is turning over one house from our inventory of foreclosed properties to the National Housing Endowment. The Endowment will work with the local homebuilders association to make the necessary repairs on the house. The property selected for the Homewise Program is a three-bedroom home located at 3890 Dresden Street. We have enclosed a picture of the property and other information is available from the Franklin County Auditor's web site.

Buyers in Columbus must meet four requirements: (1) be a Veteran with a 30 percent or more service-related disabled sustained after September 11, 2001, (2) have a total household income at or below \$51,040, (3) be a first-time home buyer, and (4) sign up for a home buyer education course. HUD will hold a lottery in Columbus among the applicants that meet all of the requirements, and one will be chosen as the Homewise family. The family will then be able to

purchase the home for 50 percent of its appraised value.

It costs you NOTHING to apply, to our local Homewise Housing Counseling Agency, Columbus Housing Partnership, 562 East Main Street, Columbus, Ohio. Their telephone number is (614) 221-8889.

Please check the HUD web site for more details:
www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/nsc/homewise.cfm.

HUD is looking forward to helping to make the American Dream of homeownership come true for a Veteran in Columbus. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (614) 469-5737, extension 8110 or James Cannon, Senior FHA Specialist, at (614) 469-5737, extension 8034.

Sincerely,
Thomas H. Leach
Field Office Director

Columbus Field Office
200 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2499

VA NEWS RELEASE

**SOME SURVIVORS FACE
DEADLINE FOR RESTORED
BENEFIT**



WASHINGTON (June 25, 2004)-The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to ensure that surviving spouses of deceased veterans are aware of and approaching deadline that may affect entitlement to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits.

Last year, President Bush signed Public Law 108-183, the "Veterans Benefits Act of 2003," which restores entitlement to DIC and

related home loan and education benefits for surviving spouses who remarry on or after their 57th birthdays.

VA officials are concerned that surviving spouses may not be aware of this change in law, or may overlook this benefit if their subsequent marriages have not ended.

Generally, VA pays DIC to the surviving spouses of military service members who die while on active duty, and to surviving spouses of veterans who's death resulted from service-related causes.

The basic monthly rate is \$967 and is increased if the surviving spouse has dependents, is housebound, or meets criteria common to those who need a home aide. There are additional payments for dependent children. Parents who were dependent upon the service member's income also may qualify for DIC.

Under previous law, surviving spouses who remarried after age 57 and before Dec. 16, 2003 have a limited time to apply for restoration of DIC.

They have one year from the date the new law was enacted (Dec. 16, 2003) to apply for restoration of benefits. If VA receives the application later than Dec. 15, 2004, restoration of DIC must be denied.

The one-year application period does not apply to other surviving spouses whose remarriage on or after attaining age 57 followed enactment of the law.

For more information on restoration of DIC, call VA's toll free number at 1-800-827-1000 or visit the nearest VA regional office. Office locations can be found in the blue pages of local telephone directories.

People who are hearing impaired should call VA at 1-800-829-4833 by use of a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD).

VETERANS JOURNAL
FALL 2003
Page 4

DAFAS UNVEILS RESERVE/GUARD PAY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

June 30, 2004 (Edited at NAUS)

CLEVELAND, OH (June 29) – DFAS has officially opened the Reserve/Guard Pay Center of Excellence within its Cleveland-based DFAS Military and Civilian Pay Services operation, thus establishing one DFAS location that will furnish pay account support for Army, Air Force and Naval Reserve and Guard Component customers.

According to the release, centralizing all Reserve and Guard pay expertise in one location greatly enhances the sharing of “best practices”, which, in turn, should improve the quality of service to DAFS’ Reserve and Guard customers. The purpose behind the Center of Excellence is to make “...DFAS more responsive to the needs of a critical component of America’s defense-the Reserve and Guard.”

A key feature of the Center is “surge capability.” The cross flow of expertise residing there will allow pay technicians to support more than one service when necessary without adversely affecting other customers. For example, technicians supporting Air Force Guard and Reserve can assist with Army Guard and Reserve activities when required for major deployments of units.

Pay and customer service operations went “live” for the Air Force Reserve Command in the Reserve Pay Center in May. Payroll operations for the Air National Guard will transition next, followed by the Army Reserve and National Guard later, based on continued cooperative efforts with the U.S. Army Financial Management, Reserve and Guard communities.

To make certain the needs of the end customer are being met, this initiative has been closely coordinated with leadership in the Reserve and Guard communities. Their guidance has been critical to the project’s success.



MILITARY ONE SOURCE SOLVES SERVICE MEMBER, FAMILY MEMBER PROBLEMS

By Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service (Edited at Naus)

WASHINGTON, June 20, 2004 = The Defense Department has establish a “one stop” place to go whenever service members or family members need assistance with any kind of problem.

It’s called “Military One Source,” and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, according to John M. Molino, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy.

“Military One Source is a revolutionary augmentation to the family services we currently have on military installations around the world,” Molino explained during an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service. Each had its own One Source program, and now DoD is bringing them together and calling it Military One Source, Molino noted.

He noted that it’s intended to complement assistance offered to military families by the services. Molino said Military One Source “leverages technology and enables DoD to provide assistance to families and service members via the Internet or a toll-free telephone number.”

The services include everything from common, everyday difficulties that might face a family to life’s

most complicated situations, he noted. “It’s a place where no matter when that situation occurs, the military family member or service member could make A PHONE CALL OR GO ON THE Internet and begin to get some help.”

When someone calls Military One Source for help, the person answering the phone has at least a master’s degree in social work or some kind of counseling service, Molino noted. “That person is trained specifically to deal with military issues – issues that complicate military life. So they’re very sensitive to what you ask,” he said.

Military One Source runs the gamut of situations: from needing a plumber in the middle of the night to fix a broken pipe, to needing veterinary service for a sick dog. It also handles things like helping families new to an area find childcare, or information about the school system, summer jobs – whatever is needed.

“One Source can get all that information and provide it to you in a most efficient manner, whether it be electronically or getting back to you on the telephone,” Molino said.

People shouldn’t be afraid or embarrassed to seek help from Military One Source, he said, but he acknowledged some people may be reluctant to ask for help. “You try to convince people that the person at the other end of the phone isn’t going to be judgmental about your situation,” he said.

Word or mouth is the best way to get the word out about Military One Source within a unit, he noted. For example, Molino said, “If I’d made a phone call and had a positive experience, I can tell you about it. I can say, You know, I tried One Source one time and it worked for me. You ought to give it a shot.” Asking for help isn’t a sign of weakness; it’s really a sign of being smart – it’s a sign of smartness,” Molino said.

**VETERANS JOURNAL
FALL 2003**

What bothers Molino is when people say they don't need help from Military One Source because of their unit assignment. "I heard that in some units they say, 'We're in an Army Ranger unit,' (or) 'we're in a Navy SEAL unit, and we don't need that kind of support,'" Molino said. "That's utter nonsense~ If the pipe breaks in the middle of the night in the home of a Navy SEAL, you need a plumber just as badly as somebody else."

"When you figure out that this is a great resource that provides help, you out to take advantage of it," Molino said.

He pointed out when service members are deployed, they can put their minds at ease knowing that if their family needs help, it's only a phone call away.



Putting himself in that position, Molino said, "I would find it very comfortable to know that my family back home has that option, that service available. And they don't have to wait for the family center to open. They don't have to wait for the family center to open. They don't have to find a way to get to the family center. My wife wouldn't have to find a way to have the children taken care of. "We can do things instantly, any time of the day or night," he continued. "If there's a language problem, One Source is able to provide services in more than 100 languages, usually in less than a minute's delay."

Military One Source also can be helpful to active duty service members. They don't have to take time off from work or training to solve a problem. All they have to do is call Military One Source, Molino noted.

He emphasized that Military One Source counseling service isn't mental health counseling, or counseling for an illness that might be burdening somebody. "We have a health care system that provides that service," he noted.

"This is a different kind of counseling. It's for folks that experience difficulties day to day. Let's say a service member has been deployed. The family has adjusted to his or her absence. Somebody is walking the dog, taking out the garbage. When he comes back, he has to fit back into the family. Others had performed those roles that he traditionally performed. Sometimes that creates friction."

All families have some degree of difficulty, and most of them manage to work through the problem. But sometimes they need a little assistance, and one toll-free phone call can get them that kind of counseling, Molino said.

Military One Source is available to National Guardsmen and reservists being called to active duty for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

"We found that it works as well for guardsmen and reservists, especially because they tend not to be close to military installations," Molino said. "They can get that kind of support through the armory. The Guard and Reserve components initially went in a different direction with a different provider. Then they realized that One Source actually was the gold standard, and they shifted over after about six months."

The toll-free numbers for Military One Source are"

From the U.S." 800-342-9647

Outside U.S.: 800-3429-6477

International collect: 484-530-5747

Related Site: Military One Source
<http://www.militaryonesource.com>



Friendly
Resourceful
Enthusiastic
Dependable

Gloria Woodard, a Veterans Service Officer, at the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission, was recently selected as the quarterly recipient of the F.R.E.D. award. She demonstrates what an employee should be, and her clients have come to depend on her skills. In addition to her own workload, she makes herself available to help co-workers, whether assisting at job fairs or speaking to groups about veterans' benefits. This award represents outstanding individual effort by a staff member and is a new program implemented to award outstanding performance by her clients and co-workers.

Attitude

By
Charles Swindoll

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ...we are in charge of our Attitudes."

**In honor
Of
Philip J. "Jack" Ross
Director,
VA Regional Office
Cleveland, Ohio**

Jack Ross was named Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office in Cleveland on September 28, 1986. He is the longest serving Director of the Cleveland Regional Office, having served there for almost 18 years.

He was responsible for administering federal benefits to 1.2 million veterans and their families living in Ohio. These services total about \$700 million in annual benefit payments and in the operation of the office. Programs include education, home loan guaranty, insurance, compensation, pension and vocational rehabilitation. Satellite offices in Columbus and Cincinnati help expedite delivery of benefits and services. He was also responsible for the management of VA's Tiger Team initiative which was recently formed to process the claims of older veterans that have been pending nationwide for over one year.

Mr. Ross began his VA career as a claims examiner at the Medical and Regional Office Center in Fort Harrison, Montana, in 1972. He advanced through positions of increasing responsibilities, principally in the adjudication field, at VA Central Office in Washington, D.C., and at regional office in Denver, Boise and Albuquerque. He was the Adjudication Officer in Los Angeles for three years before being named Assistant Director in 1986. He has also served as the Acting Chief of VA's Compensation and Pension Service.

He was born in Butte, Montana, on January 5, 1946. He is an Army

veteran serving from 1967 to 1970. He earned a bachelor's degree at Western Montana College and master's degree at Southwestern University. He has twice received the Presidential Rank Award and has been named a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary.

Mr. Ross and wife, Barbara, have six children: Jessica, Shannon, Kimberly, Phillip, Mary and James.



Maj. Gen. George S. Patton dies, son of famed WWII leader

(Inside the Turret July 2, 2004)

The Patton Museum Foundation

Retired Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, the son of the late Gen. George S Patton Jr. and Beatrice Ayer Patton, died June 27 at his home in Hamilton, Mass. After a long illness.

He was 81.

He retired from the military in 1980 after 34 years of service. Patton came from a family rich in military heritage, including a great-grandfather who was a Confederate soldier and his well-known father who led U.S. troops in Africa and Europe during World War II.

He was a graduate of West Point and saw combat in Korea and Vietnam.

During his tenure in the Army, Patton served as deputy commanding general at Fort Knox. As a colonel, he commanded the 11th Armored Cavalry "Blackhorse" Regiment in Vietnam. He took command of the Second Armored

Division at Fort Hood, Texas as a major general in the mid-1970's, the same division his father led earlier in North Africa.

Patton was awarded a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam, the Distinguished Service Medal, and was twice awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest decoration for bravery in combat. Patton earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from the U.S. Military Academy, a Master's Degree in International Affairs from George Washington University, and was a graduate of the Senior Managers in Government Program in Harvard University. He was an avid sailor, fisherman, and hunter. He served on many civic boards including the West Point Fund Committee and the Hamilton Historical Society. He was a strong supporter of and generous contributor to The Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor located at Fort Knox.

After his retirement, Patton ran Green Meadows Farm, which sells fruit and firewood.

He is survived by his wife of 5 years, the former Joanne Holbrook; sons George S Patton Jr. of Bethlehem, Conn., Robert H. Patton of Darien, Conn., and Benjamin Wilson Patton of New York; and daughters Mother Margaret Patton, OSB, a nun in Bethlehem, Conn., and Helen Plusczyk of Saarbrücken, Germany. He also leaves six grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Burial will be at Arlington Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to:

Army Emergency Relief Fund, National Family Military association, 2500 North Van Dorn St., Suite 102, Alexandria VA 22303-1601; The West Point Fund, c/o Association of the Graduates, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY 10996; St. John's Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 5610, Beverly Farms, MA 01915; and The New England Small Farm Institute, P.O. Box 608, Belchertown, MA 01007.

National Cemetery Administration:

(Source: Military service coalition Newsletter July 04)

On 11, November 1998, congressional legislation changed the name of the National Cemetery System (NCS) to the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). Today, there are 136 national cemeteries. VA, through its National Cemetery Administration, operates 120 of them. Two national cemeteries – Arlington in Virginia and the Soldiers'; and Airmen's Home in Washington, D.C. – are still administered by the Army. Fourteen national cemeteries are maintained by the Department of the Interior. More than 3 million people, including veterans of every war and conflict – from the Revolutionary War to the Operation Iraqi Freedom – are honored by burial in VA's national cemeteries, which have a total of more than 14, 200 acres of land from Hawaii to Maine and from total Alaska to Puerto Rico. More than 300 recipients of the Medal of Honor are buried in VA's national cemeteries. Monuments and memorials recall the courage and sacrifice of Americans – from Nathan Hale to "Edson's Raiders," Marine commandos who fought in the Solomon Islands' campaign during WWII. In November 2001, VA opened its 120th cemetery Fort Sill National Cemetery in Oklahoma. Currently, 60 VA cemeteries, in 34 states, are able to provide both casket and cremation burials for American's veterans and their families. An additional 23 provide burial for family members of those already buried and can also bury cremated remains.

In 1999 and 2003, with the passage of two laws, Congress directed VA to establish 12 new national

cemeteries. One of those is the Fort Sill National Cemetery. The rest – one in Alabama, two in California, three in Florida, one in George, one in Michigan, two in Pennsylvania and one in South Carolina – will be located near large populations of veterans who currently do not have access to burial in a veterans cemetery. In addition to providing a gravesite and a grave liner, VA opens and closes the grave, provides a headstone or marker, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a U.S. Flag, and perpetually cares for the grave at no cost to the veteran's family. To complement national cemeteries and expand burial options for veterans, VA assists states in building or improving state veterans cemeteries through its State Cemetery Grants Program. VA will pay for construction costs in exchange for states providing the land and operating the cemeteries. Fifty-five state veterans' cemeteries have been funded by VA grants in 29 states and Guam, and in 2003 they provided more than 18,000 interments. Today more than 25 million veterans, active duty service members killed in action, and some current and former Reservists and National guard members have earned the right to burial in a national cemetery. Veterans with discharges "other than dishonorable," their spouses and dependent children are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. For more information or to confirm eligibility, contact the nearest national cemetery or a VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000. Information also is available on NCA's home page at www.cem.va.gov.

Distinguished Marines Stamp Approved

The United States Postal Service (USPS) announced the 2005 U.S. stamp program at the August American Philatelic Society Stamp show in Sacramento, California. Key to the 2005 program for all Marines

is the long-awaited debut of a Distinguished Marines block of stamps which will be unveiled in the fall of 2004 and issued sometime in 2005. No image of the stamps will be available until the unveiling. According to Mr. Mark Saunders of the media relations section of the USPS, the Distinguished Marine stamps will include a set of four stamps honoring Marine icons, General John A. Lejeune, Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, Sergeant Major Dan Daly and Gunnery Sergeant John "Manila John" Basilone. Mr. Saunders also confirmed that these commemorative stamps will only be printed once and be available for one year after being issued. This announcement has been long awaited. Multiple Marine organizations and individuals have repeatedly requested a series of stamps honoring Marines and military personnel of the other branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. This Distinguished Marines set is a follow-on to the 2000 Distinguished Soldiers series of four stamps. Persistence is rewarded.

Meet New Director Bob Labadie

On March 17, 2004, Governor Bob Taft announced the appointment of Robert J. Labadie as Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans' Affairs, effective April 12, 2004. Labadie leaves his position as the State Facilities Management Officer for the Adjutant General. His military experience spans 30 years of active duty and reserve component assignments. He is a retired Colonel of the United States Army and a disabled veteran of the Vietnam conflict.

"Bob's excellent experience and dedication to serving his country will serve the people of Ohio well," said Taft. "I know that Bob will work hard to ensure that Ohio's veterans continue to receive the benefits and recognition they deserve."

Labadie will serve as a senior advisor to the Governor on issues affecting Ohio veterans such as employment, education, health, welfare and federal funding. He also will help develop policy and acts as a liaison to state agencies, the General Assembly and the Ohio Congressional delegation.

Labadie has received numerous military awards including the Silver Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, Distinguished Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and the Army Achievement Medal.

Labadie is currently involved in the Retired Officers Association, National Guard Association of the United States, the Ohio National Guard Officers Association, and the A.A.R.P. An active member of his community, Labadie is President and Co-Founder of the Aurora Alumni

Athletic Association, has served as Past President of the Austintown Optimists Club, and is a former official of the Ohio National Guard Officers Association.

Labadie, 55, received his B.S. degree in Liberal Arts from the University of the State of New York. Labadie and his wife, Debra Lynne, reside in Columbus.

Korean Conflict – High School Diplomas

Substitute House Bill 75 is now in law. It allows World War II and Korean Conflict veterans, who left high school prior to graduation to serve in the armed forces of the United States, to receive their high school diplomas. Family members of deceased veterans can also apply and receive the deceased veteran's diploma posthumously.

To qualify the veteran has to be a resident of Ohio or was previously enrolled in any high school in this state, served during the specific dates for either World War II (Sep 16, 1940 to Dec 31, 1946) or the Korean War (Jun 27, 1950 to Jan 31, 1955), received an honorable discharge, and has not previously been granted a high school diploma. This change in the statute will allow the veterans who have left the state to apply, for their high school diplomas if they meet the above requirements.

The county veterans' service offices will play a key role in the success of this program through their assistance in helping the veteran or surviving family members complete their application. In 2002 the annual reports for the 88 counties indicated that 1,980 World War II had applied for their high school diplomas. If you have any questions, you should contact your local county veterans' service commission office.

Some Survivors of Veterans Face Deadline for Restored Benefit

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to

ensure that surviving spouses of deceased veterans are aware of an approaching deadline that may affect entitlement to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits.

Last year, President Bush signed Public Law 108-183, the "Veterans Benefits Act of 2003," which restores entitlement to DIC and related home loan and education benefits for surviving spouses who remarry on or after their 57th birthdays.

VA officials are concerned that surviving spouses may not be aware of this change in law, or may overlook this benefit if their subsequent marriages have not ended.

Generally, VA pays DIC to the surviving spouses of military service members who die while on active duty, and to surviving spouses of veterans whose death resulted from service-related causes.

The basic monthly rate is \$967 and is increased if the surviving spouse has dependents, is housebound, or meets criteria common to those who need a home aide. There are additional payments for dependent children. Parents who were dependent upon the service member's income also may qualify for DIC.

Under previous law, surviving spouses who remarried were not eligible for DIC unless their marriage ended. At that time they could apply for reinstatement of benefits.

Under the new law, surviving spouses who remarried after age 57 and before Dec. 16, 2003, have a limited time to apply for restoration of DIC.

They have one year from the date the new law was enacted (Dec. 16, 2003) to apply for restoration of benefits. If VA receives the application later than **Dec. 15, 2004**, restoration of DIC must be denied.

The one-year application period does not apply to other surviving spouses who's remarriage on or after attaining age 57 followed enactment of the law.

For more information on restoration of DIC, call VA's toll free number at 1-800-827-100 or visit

the nearest VA regional office. Office locations can be found in the blue pages of local telephone directories.

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VETERANS JOURNAL

FALL 2003

Page 9

MILITARY AND VETERANS ASSOCIATIONS MEET WITH CRSC SERVICE CHIEFS

(National Association for Uniformed Services Update for August 27, 2004)

On Thursday, Legislative Director Ben Butler and National Military & Veterans Benefits Advisor Mike Plumer and numerous representatives from the Military Coalition met with the Service Chiefs of the CRSC branches and representatives from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. The meeting was initiated by Air Force CRSC representatives and was expanded to the other services to let the associations know that there is \$22 Billion, with a B, available for CRSC payments and that our members should apply if they have not done so before. They reported that the Army has 76 contract employees in place and 6 Military supervisors working on their claims. They have made good progress in the past several weeks but still expect that it will take until early spring before they can eliminate their backlog. They are currently clearing around 400 cases a week but are receiving 200 new ones. Progress happened quickly when they recently received a large amount of records from the VA. The Air Force has 18 people working on the cases and is currently working on cases as they come in. In other words they are caught up. The Navy/Marine CRSC head, Captain Howell stated that they have 18 contractors and 7 military members supervising. They recently made gigantic progress on their backlog

when they too received a large number of records from the VA. They currently only have 211 cases backlogged and expect to clear them shortly.

Many things have been said and written about the various services and their initial lack of responsiveness. What we heard and saw was a group of highly professional military and civilian member who are bending over backwards and going above and beyond what is expected of them. They "want" to give this \$22 billion to those deserving veterans. However they are working on it in a measured and precise manner to ensure that the fewest possible amount of mistakes are made. They really are doing well considering this whole massive program is just over a year old.

DFAS expects all eligible for IU payments will receive their second payment in September along with the back payments due. Also they expect that all those who are eligible for SMC payments will receive those by October.

For anyone who has questions or needs a status update on your CRSC application, they encourage you to write in to your various services with your questions. That will be the easiest for them and you to keep track of.

Finally they all stated that if you question the decisions made or have new evidence or VA decisions they are "Always happy to do reconsiderations."

If you or anyone you know might be qualified or you are not sure, fill out an application. These people want to give the money away and they need you to apply!!! To get application on line go to <http://www.dior.whs.mil/forms/D2860T.PDF> and download the form.

Getting a copy of your Military Records

The National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records (NPRC_MPR), in St. Louis, MO, is the repository of millions of military personnel, health, and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all service during the 20th century. NPRC (MPR) also stores medical treatment records of retirees from all services, as well as records for dependent and other persons treated at naval medical facilities. Copies of most military and medical records on files at NPRC (MPR), including the DD Form 214, Report of Separation (or equivalent), can be made available upon request.

Veterans and "Next of Kin": Veterans and next-of-kin of deceased veterans have the same rights to full access to the record. Next-of kin are the un-remarried widow or widower, son or daughter, father or mother, brother or sister of the deceased veteran.

Authorized Representatives: Authorized third party requesters, e.g., lawyers, doctors, historians, etc., may submit requests for information from individual records with the veteran's (or next of kin's, for deceased veterans) signed and dated authorization, it should include exactly what you are authorizing to be released to the third party. Authorizations are valid one year from date of signature.

General Public: The general public can also request some parts of a veteran's military record without the authorization of a veteran or next of kin. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act provide balance between the right of the public to obtain information from military service records, and the right of the former military service member to protect his/her privacy. In general, information available from military service records and the right of the former In general, information available military service member to protect his/her privacy.

In general, information available from military service records which can be released without violation of the Privacy Act are: Name, Service

Number (not Social Security Number), Rank, Dates of Service, Awards and Decorations, and Place of Entrance and Separation. If the veteran is deceased, the Place of Birth, Date of Death, Geographical Location of Death and Place of Burial can also be released.

Court Order: Access to military personnel and medical records on file at the National Personnel Records Center, may also be

VETERANS JOURNAL

FALL 2003

Page 10

gained pursuant "to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction." Subpoenas qualify as orders of a court of competent jurisdiction only if they have been signed by a judge. To be valid, court orders must also be signed by a judge. Authority for these requirements is 5 U.S.C. 552a (b) (11), as interpreted by Doe vs. DiGenova, 779 F. 2d 74 (D.C. Cir. 1985), and Stiles vs. Atlanta Gas and Light Company, 453 F. Supp. 798 (N.D. Ga. 1978)

The records stored at the National Personnel Records Center cover military personnel who were discharged on or after the below-listed dates:

Air Force Officers and Enlisted-
September 25, 1947

Army Officers separated
July 1, 19017

Army Enlisted separated
November 1, 1912

Navy Officers separated
January 1, 1903

Navy Enlisted separated
January 1, 1886

Marine Corps Officers and Enlisted separated
January 1, 1905

Coast Guard Officers and Enlisted separated
January 1, 1898

Military personnel records for individuals separated before these dates are on file at the National Archives and Records Administration, Old Military and Civil Records Branch (NWCTB),

Washington, DC 20408. Email address: inquire@arch2.nara.gov.

Federal law (5 USC 552a(b)) requires that all requests for records and information be submitted in writing. The easiest way to do this is by using Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records.

Requesting Copies of Military Records (Including DD Form 214/215) Requests must contain enough information to identify the record among the more than 70 million on file at National Personnel Records Center. The Center needs certain basic information in order to locate military service records. This information includes the veteran's complete name used while in service, service number or social security number, branch of service, and dates of service. Date and place of birth may also be helpful, especially if the service number is not known. If the request pertains to a record that may have involved in the 1973 fire, also include place of discharge, last unit assignment, and place of entry into service, if known.

The SF 180, although not mandatory, is the recommended method to send a request for military service information. This form captures all the necessary information to locate a record. Provide as much information on the form as possible and send copies of any service documents that you may have. Requests may also be submitted as a letter, containing the basic information listed above.

Mail the completed SF 180, or the signed written request to:

National Personnel Records Center
(Military Personnel Records)
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Completing a Records Request On-line Veterans and "Next-of-kin" can now complete a records request on-line. One must still print out and sign a signature verification and mail or fax the verification, because Federal Law requires a signature on all records request. However, completing the

application online can be easier and faster than completing the SF Form 180.

Those who are not veterans or next-of-kin, cannot use the on-line system. They must complete the SF 180.

Requesting Copies of Military Medical Records, Clinical and medical treatment records are filed at the National Personnel Records Center by the name of the facility which last had responsibility for the records. Therefore, in order to request information from medical records, you must provide the following information:

*****NAME OF THE LAST FACILITY WHICH HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TREATMENT RECORD.** Usually this is the last facility at which treatment was provided.

*****The YEAR and the TYPE OF TREATMENT** (inpatient, outpatient, dental, mental health, etc.) If you need copies of specific records, please be sure to state the type of illness, injury, or treatment.

*****The patient's FULL NAME used during treatment**

*****The patient's SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER and STATUS** during treatment [military, retired, dependent of military, federal employee, dependent, or other (specify)].

*****BRANCH OF SERVICE and SPONSOR'S SERVICE NUMBER or SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER** (if the former patient is/was a dependent). You should provide as much information as possible. It may not be possible to locate a record if important identifying information is missing. For medical records of separated/retired military personnel and NAVY/Marine Corps dependents, send you request to:

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

For medical records of Air Force, Coast Guard, or Army Dependents, send request to:

National Personnel Records Center
Civilian Personnel Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126

Veterans who plan to file a claim for medical benefits with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) do not need to request a copy of their military health record from the National Personnel Records Center. When you file a VA claim, the Department of Veterans Affairs will request the record automatically, as part of the claims process.

VETERANS JOURNAL

FALL 2003

Page 11

Generally there is no charge for military personnel and health record information provided to veterans, next-of-kin, and authorized representatives. If your request involves a service fee, you will be notified as soon as the determination is made.

How Long Does it Take?

It wasn't all that long ago when turnaround time for military records was miserable. It was not unusual for a simple DD Form 214/215 request to take up to 180 days.

NPRC has transformed the way it responds to inquiries, to provide dramatically improved customer service. This Business Process Reengineering project has changed structures and systems that in some cases have been in place since the center was formed 40 years ago. As a test, I requested a copy of my DD Form 214 in December 2003, using the on-line system. I was pleasantly surprised to receive my DD Form 214 copy in just 18 days from the date of my request.

However, the folks at NPRC are still busy animals. They process nearly 20,000 requests per week. Turnaround times for records requested from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) vary greatly depending on the nature of the request. For example request that involve reconstruction

efforts due to the 1973 fire may take much longer.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

We encourage you to visit or call our office or outstations if you need help or have question pertaining to financial, veteran's benefits or entitlements. Our main office is located at the Franklin County Veterans Memorial Building. The address is 250 W. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215-2787. The phone number is (614) 462-2500. The FAX number is (614) 462-2505.

FRANKLIN COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE
COMMISSION
250 W BROAD ST
COLUMBUS OH 43215-2787

